

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON SALT TALKS

NO. 23

HEREWITH EXCERPTS FROM GWERTZMAN IN NEW YORK TIMES APRIL 2,
1977 HEADLINED "US ERRED ON MOOD IN SOVIET FOR TALKS"

"THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION APPARENTLY MISCALCULATED THE
MOOD AND INTENTIONS OF THE SOVIET LEADERS BEFORE AND DURING
SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE'S TRIP TO MOSCOW, AND
THIS MISCALCULATION CONTRIBUTED TO THE AMERICANS' REACTION
OF SURPRISE WHEN NO PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED IN ENDING THE
IMPASSE ON LIMITING STRATEGIC ARMS....

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, IN DISREGARDING THE KISSINGER
APPROACH, BELIEVED - DESPITE STRONG WARNINGS FROM MOSCOW
TO THE CONTRARY - THAT THE RUSSIANS COULD BE PERSUADED TO
ACCEPT THE CRUISE MISSILES AS PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
BROUGHT TO MOSCOW BY MR. VANCE.

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EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT, AMERICAN OFFICIALS CONCEDED PRIVATELY
THAT WHILE IN MOSCOW ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY THEY MISSED THE
NEGATIVE SIGNS GIVEN THEM BY THE SOVIET SIDE AND DID NOT EX-
PECT MR. BREZHNEV TO REJECT THE TWO AMERICAN PROPOSALS ON
STRATEGIC ARMS.

SEVERAL OFFICIALS SAID THAT MR. VANCE AND HIS DELEGATION DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MR. BREZHNEV, IN THE FINAL SESSION ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, WOULD SEND MR. VANCE HOME WITH NOTHING TO SHOW ON STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION.

THEY HAD EXPECTED, OFFICIALS SAID PRIVATELY, THAT MR. BREZHNEV WOULD EITHER ASK FOR MORE TIME TO STUDY THE COMPLICATED PACKAGE PLAN THAT CALLED FOR "DEEP CUTS" IN EACH SIDE'S FORCE LEVELS, OR AGREE TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA, LEAVING OPEN A POSSIBILITY OF EVENTUAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE AMERICAN PLAN.

'YOU CAN'T BLAME VANCE ALONE,' ONE AIDE SAID. 'HE WAS TOLD WHILE WE WERE IN MOSCOW THAT THE SIGNS WERE GOOD. GROMYKO WENT TO THE BALLET WITH HIM ON SUNDAY NIGHT AND GROMYKO HARDLY EVER GOES TO THE BOLSHOI AND WE THOUGHT THAT WAS A GESTURE.'

'BREZHNEV'S COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ON MONDAY MORNING WERE NOT TERRIBLY ROUGH AND WERE NOT LINKED TO SALT,' THE OFFICIAL SAID. 'AND WE THOUGHT WE HONESTLY HAD A GOOD SALT PROPOSAL FOR THE RUSSIANS.'

ANOTHER OFFICIALS SAID THAT IN HINDSIGHT THE AMERICANS SHOULD HAVE BEEN APPREHENSIVE WHEN MR. BREZHNEV WAS NOT PRESENT ON MONDAY AFTERNOON TO HEAR MR. VANCE'S FULL-LENGTH PRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN STRATEGIC ARMS POSITION. WHEN MR. BREZHNEV DID NOT APPEAR ON TUESDAY, MR. VANCE WAS TOLD BY HIS ADVISERS THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY A UNCLASSIFIED

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FAVORABLE SIGN BECAUSE THIS MEANT THE RUSSIANS WERE GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE PROPOSALS.

MR. VANCE WAS TOLD, IN FACT BY SOME AMERICANS THAT HE MIGHT HAVE TO STAY OVER AN EXTRA DAY OR SO TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSALS FURTHER WITH MR. BREZHNEV. BUT ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MR. BREZHNEV RETURNED TO THE TALKS, AND IN ONE HOUR FLATLY REJECTED THE PLANS.

'I THINK NOW IT IS CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS PROBABLY DECIDED EVEN BEFORE WE GOT TO MOSCOW THAT THEY WOULD REJECT OUR IDEAS,' ONE OFFICIAL SAID. 'THEY JUST HAD TO SHOW THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THAT IT COULDN'T EXPECT TO COME TO POWER AND MAKE THE KIND OF STATEMENTS CARTER WAS MAKING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SALT AND EXPECT MOSCOW TO BITE ON A RADICALLY DIFFERENT SALT PACKAGE.' ...

ABOARD THE PLANE, MR. VANCE HELD A BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE, BUT REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON WHAT HAD CAUSED

THE MOSCOW TRIP TO TURN OUT THE WAY IT DID.

WITHIN THE AMERICAN DELEGATION, SOME OF THE EXPERTS
APPEARED UNEASY OVER MR. CARTER'S POLICY OF SPEAKING PUBLICLY ON SENSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.

THEY SAID THEY AGREED THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SHOULD
KNOW MORE ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY BUT THEY QUESTIONED THE
WISDOM OF MR. CARTER'S REVEALING AT A NEWS CONFERENCE
LAST THURSDAY THE OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION
PROPOSALS BEFORE THE PLAN HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE
RUSSIANS.

MR. CARTER SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN
TO KEEPING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC INFORMED AND THIS PROMPTED
HIM TO OUTLINE HIS STRATEGIC ARMS PROPOSALS, FIRST IN HIS
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UNITED NATIONS SPEECH TWO WEEKS AGO AND AGAIN AT HIS
NEWS CONFERENCE.

LIKEWISE, THE WHITE HOUSE DID NOT SEEM TO TAKE SERIOUSLY
THE WARNINGS BY THE RUSSIANS AND ALSO BY THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY IN MOSCOW THAT THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN BY MR.
CARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS WERE CREATING A POOR MOOD FOR
NEGOTIATIONS." . END EXCERPT.
CHRISTOPHER

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